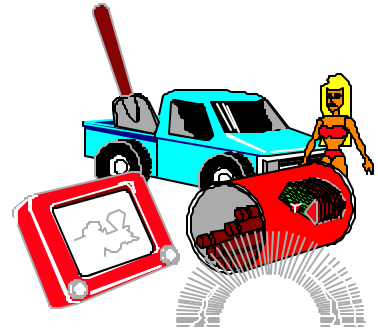


A Letter to Parents on Table Toys



What We Do and Why

Table toys include puzzles, various table blocks, and other small construction materials such as Legos, Ring-Majigs, and collections of objects (including shells, bottle caps, and buttons). When children use table toys, they learn many new skills and concepts, including:

- Sorting and classifying things according to their own categories
- Judging distance, direction, right and left, up and down
- Describing what they are thinking and doing

When children use table toys in the classroom, we encourage them to talk about what they are doing. For example, we might say:

- “Tell me about those blocks you are using.”
- “How did you get those rings to fit together?”

We also ask questions that help children extend their thinking as they play with table toys. For example:

- “You grouped all the bottle tops by color. Can you put them together any other way?”
- “You’ve picked out all the pegs that are the same. Can you tell me how they are the same?”

These questions and comments are designed to help the children become aware of what they doing and develop their thinking skills.

What You Can Do At Home

Small colored cubes, those about one inch square, offer many opportunities for your child to build patterns and designs. These cubes can be made into a tower, a corral, or other formations, depending on the child’s interest. Colored cubes such as beads can be used to make patterns of colors and sizes: red, blue, yellow, and then repeat: large, small, medium, and then repeat.

You might collect various small objects such as buttons, seashells, rocks, and plastic bottle tops. You can give your child a tray to use on the floor if the surface isn’t level, or let your child sit at a table to play. Make suggestions such as sorting all the buttons that are the same color or all the beads that are the same size. Encourage your child to tell you about the design he or she is making or why things belong together.

Playing with table toys at home promotes a child’s development in many important ways. However, the most important contribution you can make to your child’s learning with table toys is to take an interest in what your child does, both at home and in school. We welcome you to the classroom at any time. In this way you can see for yourself how much your child is learning.